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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, January 10, 2022)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Mighty God, our strong fortress, we worship You, for Your mercies are new each day.

Lord, You keep us safe, protecting us with the shield of Your divine blessings. Continue to bless our lawmakers. Give them the wisdom to call for Your help and receive Your deliverance from trouble. Dispel the shadows that surround them with Your divine light.

Lord, take hold of their future, doing for them, this day and always, more than they can ask or imagine.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING HARRY REID

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before I begin my remarks, I see my dear friend, the President, sitting there—the Senator from Nevada—and I am just thinking, last night, as we watched Harry Reid leave the Senate for the final time: Harry, we miss you, but we know you are still here to guide us. Thank you.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on defending democracy—something Leader Reid would have been passionate about, if he were still with us here, and he is telling us that now—over the next few days, the U.S. Senate will face a critical and unavoidable question: Are its Members going to act to protect our democracy and protect voting rights or will its Members choose the path of obstruction, inaction, and side with the Big Lie overtaking our precious experiment in self-rule?

We had two professors come to us 2 days ago, the authors of “How Democracies Die,” and one of the main ways that democracies die is when one political party refuses to accept the results of an election that was run freely and fairly. That is what is happening here. They showed how important this is and how there is unfortunate historical precedent in doing what we did.

And earlier this week, President Biden made that clear. He made clear to the Nation—and to all of us who

serve in the Senate—that the time to answer the question about whether allowing the Big Lie, so ruinous to a democracy, to overtake our precious experiment in self-rule will prevail.

As the Senate has done many times in its history, it must soon act again to safeguard democracy from the dangers of the present day: the power of dark money, voter suppression, and efforts to subvert the democratic process from the bottom up.

I commend President Biden for offering a strong speech, and I look forward to having him join Senate Democrats later today at our caucus meeting to discuss the path forward.

Yesterday, I shared with my Democratic colleagues our plan for what the next few days are going to look like in this Chamber and how I, as majority leader, will move to finally begin, at last, a floor debate on the voting rights legislation.

Later today, the House of Representatives will pass a message that will include the language of the two bills Republicans have filibustered for months—the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

As permitted under the existing rules, we will have the ability to proceed to the legislation and debate it on a simple majority basis—something that has been denied to us four times in the last several months because Republicans didn’t want to move forward. Then the Senate will finally hold a debate on the voting rights legislation for the first time in this Congress, and every Senator will be faced with a choice of whether or not to pass this legislation to protect our democracy.

There has been a lot of gas-lighting here on the floor lately from the other side about power grabs, about takeovers, but precious little in terms of substance. I have not heard them mention what Republican legislatures are

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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